



## **Demogorgons aren't nearly as dangerous a handsome boy with great hair by petuliaklimpt**

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**Summary:** Maisie Henderson is sure about three things in life: one, she loves her little brother; two, she's basically invisible to mostly everyone at school; and three, Hawkins is the most boring and mundane town in the whole of the US. Well, it's about time she starts herself questioning the later two. (Steve Harrington OC)

## **Demogorgons aren't nearly as dangerous a handsome boy with great hair**

*Hi everybody! Been honestly wanting to write a ff about Steve ever since the end of S1 but then we didn't know much about him so I thought I'd be silly to write about a character we basically know nothing of so I waited until S2 and then we go like heaps on conten but then I was waiting until S3 because I didn't want to mess up or anything and my time is finally here. Not sure if this is good or not, but reviews are always welcome!*

Maisie Henderson sighed on annoyance as she moved her fingers anxiously over the steering wheel, looking back and forwards and debating whereas she should betray her believes and values and start clinging to the horn, bringing embarrassment to both, herself for she was sitting inside the car and to the little boys who were supposed to have hopped in it about ten minutes ago. Against her own preservation wishes, letting out a very dramatic sigh she took the keys off the engine and zipped up high her jacket, for she knew she had no other option but to go out on the cold November air if she hoped to ever get those kids out of the Arcade.

Luckily for her, neither the horn or getting off the car were necessary, for just as she was about to open the door she was relieved to see four little heads getting out of the place while talking very loudly, their soon approaching voices letting her know those were indeed the kids she was supposed to drive around.

"Hey, Maisie" they all said as they got comfortable in the warmness of her car and soon most of them went back to talking amount themselves

"You won't believe what just happened" her little brother, Dustin said to her from the seat next to her own, looking at her with wide eyes, as if he was to relate to her the most amazing adventure of all times, which on his defense, he really thought was the case "I beat Mike's record at Ms. Pac Man and I was just that close to beating up the three guys that where ahead of him on the list" he said as gesturing with his index and middle finger the length of how close he really

was.

"That sounds cool, Dusty" she said with a proud smile as she turned on the engine and drove away, not that she understood much about it, but her brother obviously seemed to be think of it as a great achievement "How long have you guys been in there for?"

"About four hours" Mike replied from the back seat, looking at her with his huge eyes "I was tired, you know, Maisie. And my wrist was sore, that's why Dustin won"

"Yeah sure, it wasn't sore when you were playing before me"

"That's when it got sore"

Rolling her eyes, the teenager chose to stay away from the upcoming argument that was coming up between the boys about the reason why Mike Wheeler was no longer number one at Ms. Pac Man among their friends- mainly because she didn't care on the least about video games and that sort of stuff and also because she was trying to come up with a good strategy that would allow her to drop all the boys in their respective homes on the least amount of time since she was running short of time and there still were twenty pages of a script she had to memorize for the next day resting over her nightstand waiting for her to read them.

The main problem being Will Byers, since he lived the furthest out of the whole lot, she came up with the idea that she perhaps could drop him at Ethelson's, which was the place where his brother worked, and given the time, she knew soon Jonathan Byer's ship would be over and he'd be driving home, so it'd work out perfectly to drive Will there.

Smiling at her own cleverness, Maisie took the first turn she found and made her way towards the place, looking over her reversal mirror to look at Will and ask if he was okay with it.

When they got there, Will Byers said quickly his goodbyes and thank you for driving him there and left the car in record time. However, ignoring the rational part of her brain that was telling her to go home and work on that damn script, Maisie just couldn't help but to click

her lights on, trying to let the older Byers to look over from the glass and walk towards the car. After two failed attempts, it finally worked, and so Jonathan was walking towards the car after making sure no costumer was about to enter the premises.

"Come in!" she squeaked from the front seat, horrified he was standing on the cold with nothing but a light sweater.

Rolling his eyes, he did as he was told and got into the back seat, a bit nervous about leaving the store alone but knowing Will was in there and would call for him if anyone came in. Expectantly, he looked towards the blonde to know the reasoning behind her getting him into her car.

"So?"

"So nothing, just wanted to check up on you" she smiled as she turned half her body around, resting her hand over the seat "Also, I think you should wear a thicker sweater. And a jacket. And maybe a scarf" she said, the smile long gone and instead a worried frown occupying her face.

"Not all of us are as extremely shivery as you, Maise" he chuckled

"That's where you get it wrong, Byers. I'm not even '*shivery*', I just feel things as they are because I've got a great corporal thermometer which most people don't possess, and I'm telling you, it's cold and you need a thicker jacket"

"Fine, I'll get one, mom" he complained, still amused by her argument which she let out every single time he'd tell her she was being overly dramatic regarding the weather "Are you going to school tomorrow?"

"Why wouldn't I?"

"Well, you have P.E and you hate it" he answered simply "and you do take every opportunity you get to avoid it, that's why"

"Well, Einstein. I can't just miss school every time I have P.E, as much as I'd love to" she let out thoroughly, making her brother chuckle "but yeah, no, I'm going. Besides we're working on these complicated scenes that are like ten minutes each, which reminds me I've to go

home and finish that reading. Goodbye, Johnny boy. I'll see you tomorrow at school" she said hurriedly, once again feeling like she wouldn't have enough time

To this, Jonathan chuckled once again, as he usually did when they were together.

"Fine, good luck with that. Thanks for giving Will a ride"

After he got out of the car, Maisie pressed softly on the horn twice and waved at her best friend as he got into the store, utterly humiliated by the fact some people who were passing by looked at him upon hearing the annoying sound coming from the car.

Maisie Henderson and Jonathan Byers became best friends back in freshman year. They were acquaintances with each other before; having attended the same primary school ever since he moved into Hawkins, but back then they chose to stay separated one from the other. Then high school started, and by some strange reason, Maisie was left friendless: one of the girls she used to hang out with at school had been put back a year, another one was moving to Minnesota and the third simply didn't want anything else to do with Maisie- which may or may not have had something to do with the fact that it was high school and the blonde still wore braces, which left her alone. Not having any friends in high school, as a freshman meant that you didn't get to eat your lunch at the cafeteria, mainly because it was really embarrassing, which lead the girl to eat hers just outside the Drama auditory, by the stairs; it was there where she found Jonathan devouring a turkey sandwich. They soon became close friends, not only because they were both in similar situations- loneliness, but because they could tolerate each other's jokes, cared deeply about their little brothers, had terrible fathers and were both sworn fans of MASH.

When she got home, Maisie greeted her mom who said she was worried she hadn't come sooner to which the teenager replied on her defense that the kids took a bit longer coming out of the Arcade and also, that she lost track of time talking to Jonathan, to which her mother winked an eye making the girl roll her eyes. Ever since they started hanging out at each other's places, Claudia Henderson seemed to think the two of them had a fancy on each other and that it was

just a matter of time until they confessed their feelings and became a couple, a theory the blonde had denied over and over again, considering Jonathan nothing but a friend.

That night at dinner the girl had to manage a way to eat her lasagna while holding and focusing on her play, which her mother had already suggested to pull away so she could enjoy her dinner, but the teen had denied saying she wouldn't get it done if she stopped. Finally, she fell asleep on her bed with Mews on her feet, the very same script over her face; clearly she had been trying to read it at odd hours at night.

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That Monday definitively couldn't get any worse than it already was, she decided. Had she not only been shaken up awake by her brother that morning after her clock decided not to function, she had also ran out of time so she wasn't able to try and ease her curls and at last, during drama class, her favourite one, she had been called up front to act the very scene she still hadn't mastered, hence she ended up looking like a fool in front of everyone and her archenemy, Donna Green had been there to save the day, making their teacher adore her even more.

She was just in the middle of telling Jonathan all the misfortunes that her day had carried, not even bothering on eating her turkey sandwich which she was perhaps squeezing just a little bit too hard as she complained. As per usual, the boy sitting next to her wasn't taking her seriously; knowing that the '*Maisie rant time*', as he called it, was prone to happen at least once a week and it was mostly about inoffensive things.

They were just as every single day, having lunch inside Jonathan's car. It had become a tradition, really, since they were still not on conditions of eating at the cafeteria but the stairs next to the auditorium seemed far too embarrassing, as soon as the Byers boy had gotten his license, they began hanging out inside his car while on the parking lot. Maisie thought it was a good spot, it gave them freedom to talk about everything they wanted and they were freed from whatever kind of interaction they could possibly be forced to have with other people from the school.

"And even worse, I have P.E now and I'm out of excuses of why I can't run" she cried, letting her head fall unto the seat's headrest, finally deciding on giving her sandwich a big bite and making the boy chuckle at her comment "anyway, we should make plans for this weekend, so I can recover from this day"

"We can hang out at my place if you want; my mom says she misses you"

"Aw! She's so sweet. I miss her too" she smiled softly when thinking of Joyce Byers whom she hadn't seen ever since last Friday "we could watch my 'Cats' VCR!" she shouted happily, as if she had gotten the best and most original idea of all time, despite the fact that she had actually done so many times.

"I think I'll pass. Also, isn't it illegal to record a live show and then play it at your house?"

"What's illegal, my dear Johnny boy, is the fact that we only have another five minutes until the bell sounds and I have to walk towards my imminent death: P.E since it includes shorts in bloody winter"

That made him smile and both soon began talking about how really torturous P.E was and how much it sucked they didn't share that class since Jonathan didn't even take it and Maisie was only there by a mistake of the reception lady. Trying to make the last minutes worth something, the teenager stuffed her face and finished her sandwich just on time, which probably wasn't such a good idea considering she was supposed to run around the gymnasium.

Being that probably the last time the two of them would see each other during the day since they shared no other classes for the day, the two friends said their goodbyes while agreeing on meeting Friday night. Most weekends were like that for the two, they'd hang out at each other's houses and they'd probably watch some movies and eat junk food until Jonathan got bored, and then they'd just chat or play some board games until it was time to leave. It wasn't that they were antisocial individuals who disliked any sort of human interaction like parties- well, Jonathan was a bit, but Maisie on the other hand would've loved to know what doing stuff like that felt, but unfortunately, she had only been invited to a high school party once



and she had been sick with measles and unable to attend then, and ever since, her invitations number declined to 0.

The gym class was the absolute worst thing of her days in general and that was a fact. It wasn't that she hated moving or anything like that since dancing definitely was one of her most beloved things to do, but her hands coordination was possibly her most terrible quality and often resulted on balls smashing on her face or people cursing and yelling at her because she dropped it and made the whole team lose points. Reciting Shakespeare in front of dozens of parents, teachers and students? No problem, call Maisie Henderson, she's your girl; playing an innocent dodgeball game? You may want to ask for backups.

As per usual, she was the last one to get into the dressing room, only one or two girls who were left because they got too caught up at gossiping. As she had been mentally preparing herself to do so ever since she got out of the car, changing clothes wasn't as difficult as it would've been otherwise, but that didn't mean that she didn't hate it.

Dragging her feet towards the gym, the blonde couldn't help but to grab her arms in order to get some warmth while her legs were left to suffer without any type of protection. She knew as soon as they started running her temperature would get back to normal and she wouldn't be as cold anymore, but that didn't make it any more annoying.

When she finally reached the meeting place, she noticed there were way more people than there usually was for gym class. Paying a little bit more attention, as the teacher talked, she noticed that those weren't just your regular people; they were juniors, people who usually had class during the next period, but apparently would be sharing the class for the day. That had made it. As if it wasn't embarrassing enough making a fool of herself in front of her own classmates, now, she'd be doing it in front of older kids.

When coach Wilson told them to pair on groups of two, Maisie couldn't help but to let out groan as she moved to one of the ends, knowing fully well that no one was going to choose her and that she didn't particularly feel like choosing anyone, so she would just wait until there was one person left and that shall be it. In a matter of five

minutes everyone already had a partner, everyone but...

"Henderson!" coach Wilson called, obviously inquiring why was she the only one left without a partner, standing on the side and looking like a small miserable duck.

To that the blonde couldn't do anything more than shrug while raising both her hands up. What was that man honestly expecting her to do? Build a complete human being out of air so it could be her partner? Whoever, it was clear that her answer wasn't enough, for the teacher rolled his eyes while waving away.

"Harrington!" he yelled, turning around and making not only the girl who had been question previously but many other heads rise up, looking expectantly towards where the coach's eyes fell.

Upon the call, a tall boy with the coolest hair many of those present there had ever seen in their lives ran towards him, smiling as he had not even one single worry on his face as he did so. Maisie didn't know him well, they shared one class, since the girl was advanced at English but still they had never crossed words with each other, whereas she sat on the first rows, he did on the back. It was easy to see he was one of the popular guys from school, and he was a junior, meaning that at that given moment, the blonde was praying to all the Gods above that what she thought was going to happen wouldn't. Of course she didn't get her wish granted.

"Those extra credits you wanted? Granted, but you'll have to come to this class too on top of the other one and pair with Henderson, got it?"

"Awesome, sir. You won't regret it, you'll see" he said, as he turned around and after inspecting the room for a few seconds he found the only student that was on its own and quickly made his way next to her.

Maisie's face was starting warm up, and she didn't even look up upon the arrival of that certain boy. Not that she got embarrassed from people looking at her, like they all were at the moment, but she was embarrassed about what was going to come next. All she needed to know about Harrington was that he was popular, older, friends with

Tommy H.- school's biggest prick and by the smile she saw creeping through his face when he was told he'd be doing double shifts on P.E, it was easy to tell he was also a sports enthusiast; all of that told her that they were definitely not going to get along and that he'd probably end up yelling at her if not worse.

And just when she thought her suffering had been enough, Coach Wilson opened his mouth again: "Now, listen to me y'all. This partner you have, embrace it, trust it, get attach to it; for it will be the same one you'll be having until the end of the year. I'm tired of wasting at least ten minutes of class each day every time I tell you to do something as simple as pairing up, got it? Now, let's have you do three runs and then grab a ball and do some passes, I'll tell you what to do from then"

As he was finished, most people started moving to the sides so they could start doing as they were told. Now, Maisie normally had no problem starting conversations with people, but considering the boy who was now her partner was a presumed bad guy, without mentioning he would surely grow to hate her as soon as she touched a ball, she was wondering if she should even bother. However, she didn't have time to even say anything, because he spoke first.

"Looks like we're stuck together then" he smiled at her, and she had to raise her head quite a lot in order to see that "I'm Steve, by the way"

"Maisie" she let out, as they started trotting "We've got English together"

"Ah, right. I thought I recognized you" she knew he was lying, but didn't pay it no mind.

"Doesn't it bother you?"

"Huh?"

"This? Being paired up with me when it's not even your class?"

"Nah, I need those extra credits so this actually helps me a lot. Does it bothers you?" he asked and the girl next to him was astonished by

how easily words came out of him when running, whereas she lost vital air every time she opened her mouth.

"No, but I'm pretty bad at sports and you may get annoyed"

To her surprise, he chuckled at that statement, and she had to look up in order to see his face and try to figure out where had that come from, looking at him with the most confused expression ever.

"I'm sure you're not that bad" he simply said.

After that they concentrated mostly on doing the rest of the work because there wasn't many more things to say given that they had just met and also, because talking wasn't doing her any good if she wanted to keep up with her partner whose long legs allowed him to run much easier than her midget's ones. By the end of the run, she was trying to recover and bring air to her lungs while he was smiling an even kept on running to go and get the ball.

Passing the ball was a disaster since the beginning. Steve clearly seemed to be pretty good at everything that involved one and Maisie wasn't, dropping it the first time he threw it at her. Upon the realization that perhaps she was telling the truth when warning him about her skills, he began throwing it a bit softer, which sort of worked.

When coach Wilson told them to gather up so he'd tell them what to do next, the blonde walked towards the boy with a frown.

"Told you I was bad"

"No, you aren't bad" he lied, making the girl lift her brows "Well, maybe a little but you can get better"

She was about to reply, but soon Coach Wilson had them all playing volleyball in four different teams. She was lucky enough Steve was designed their team's captain and when she said she wasn't feeling very well and asked if could serve as a backup for a bit he easily agreed. However, her luck ran short when the teacher realized it was no one else but her, his worse student, the one sitting on the bench, and by the time her team scored its fifth point she was sent back to

the court and Tina Johnson was sent to rest.

For the most part, she managed not to even touch the ball, which wasn't really a good thing considering that it fell at least three times next to her feet and she could hear every single member of the team yelling and whining at her, with the exception of her partner who just looked at her as if he couldn't believe someone was that bad at something as easy as volleyball; she guessed he wasn't yelling at her because being that his second and least important class, he didn't care much about it.

By the time class was finished she let out a sigh full of gratitude as she tried to cover up the little bit of sweat shown on her t-shirt. By some kind of divine intervention- that one being Steve Harrington and another two kids who seemed to be professionals at it, they managed to win by two points, so no one was eying her evilly by the time she walked back to the changing rooms. If they had lost, considering most of it would have been her fault, she wouldn't hear the end of it.

Just as she thought humans interactions with anyone but her own family were finished by the day, she heard someone shouting her name from behind.

"Hey, Henderson!"

She cringed when noticed that was no one but poor Steve Harrington walking towards her, the very unfortunate boy who had been condemned to be her partner for the rest of the year, and she could only guess he was approaching to tell her off and give her a whole lecture about trying harder and stuff, so of course she quickly prepared the usual answer she gave everyone who ever dared to mention her inexistent athletic skills, about how she had other things working on her side and stuff. As she was about to open her mouth, she was surprised by seeing him smile

"You weren't kidding, huh?"

The frown on her face made his amusement grow even more

"No, I told you I sucked"

"Nah, you don't suck at it is just.... well, yeah, you suck at it"

And the way he said it, as if it wasn't that big of a deal but instead something funny, somehow managed to get a chuckle from her. She had tried joking around about her lack of athletic skills at first with other people from the class, trying to be friendly and lessen up their annoyance, but none of the others had reacted to it on a positive way. When they made jokes that involved her class efficiency, those were at her expense; now Steve Harrington was not laughing at her, but was instead trying to include her into that joke.

"I know. You can try asking Coach Wilson if you can trade with someone else. I'm sure Allison Page won't mind much, she's not that good either so she can't complain about me"

"Nah" he laughed "I think I'll stick with you"

And then they both walked towards opposite ways, but while Steve walked away easily and probably soon forgetting about their conversation to think of better things, Maisie Henderson was unable to get it out of her head. Okay, perhaps she was being stupid, but a popular, older, attractive guy being actually nice to her and not ignoring her as if she was the plague and even laughing at things she also considered to be funny, like her lack of coordination, was something that didn't happen to her every day. What surprised her the most, was that said very individual was friends with Tommy H, a person who had in more than one occasion made fun of her and most people she associated herself with as they walked pass the hallways.

If she had had any close girlfriends, perhaps she'd have called and told them all about the guy being nice to her and they'd laugh and make theories and mock her about an nonexistent crush she'd deny over and over again, but given the fact that her only three real friends in the world were all male, one of them being a cat, the other her brother and the last Jonathan Byers, she decided to just let the thought rest and see if he was still as nice during next class.

During the next few days, everything went pretty much the same at P.E; Steve Harrington kept on being nice and every time she'd mess up with something- which was often, he offered advice on how to do it correctly without making her feel like an absolute idiot. Although

her hatred for P.E was just as candid as usual, not having to go through the bother of finding a new partner each day and having to hear them complain about her during the whole class was definitely an improvement. Also, she had overheard some girls from their class while in the showers and they were commenting on how jealous they were about Maisie being paired up with *THE* Steve Harrington, and somehow, that made her feel sort of happy, it wasn't every day that people were jealous of her for whatever reason. On Wednesday class, as he got in late into English, he even smiled at her as he walked pass her desk.

On Thursday, after class, she was standing with Jonathan next to his locker, discussing which kind of movie they were watching on the next day. The blonde was big on 'The wizard of Oz' but the boy was more inclined towards 'Scanners' a sci-fi movie he owned and they had seen about a thousand times.

"You chose last time"

"Yes and you enjoyed that, that's why you should let me pick again! Admit it Johnny my movies are just better"

She was so indulged on convincing her best friend on watching the movie she liked once again, that she didn't notice a certain boy walking just pass them.

"Hey, Henderson" he said casually with a smirk, as he walked along with two of his friends who she didn't recognize and didn't even bother looking at her.

"Oh, hey!" she said back, once she recovered from the surprise but he was already ahead of her and gone.

That had been the first time she had ever heard him acknowledging her outside a classroom. She wasn't sure how it was she supposed he was supposed to behave around her outside class, but she was contempt with keep on being ignored, just as it had been for years.

However, no matter how confused she was, she wasn't nearly as lost as poor Jonathan Byers, who looked at her with his brows furrowed, demanding for an explanation.

"Since when are you and Steve Harrington friends?"

"We're not friends. We're just partners at P.E"

"Only when you thought it couldn't get worse" Jonathan chuckled.

"He's not bad" she let out with a shrug.

"Funny one, Maise"

"No, really. He's sort of nice" she explained as they began walking towards their next class

"Please don't tell me you've turned into one of them"

"One of who?"

"A '*Steve Harrington's fans club*' member" he said, making her roll her eyes.

"Well, I can't since currently I'm president of the '*Jonathan Byers is a dumbass association*' and that consumes most of my time"

And despite the fact that he still found it really weird that his best friend, a girl who was every now and then picked on by the guys Steve Harrington considered were friends of his, he couldn't help but laugh at her sense of humour.

Lastly, on Friday, she got the final proof to decide Steve Harrington was indeed a good guy who just hanged out with the wrong kind of people. They were supposed to elongate- apparently coach Wilson had just been to this seminary and he had learnt the wonderful benefits of elongation, and while Maisie had thought it would be really weird to do it with Steve, given that they barely knew each other and it included a lot of touching, she was actually surprised at how easily conversation began to flow between the two and how natural touching came down to be, which was natural, considering they were on a classroom and that was what they were supposed to do.

"So how come I never see you at lunch? I swear yesterday was the first time I've ever seen you outside class" he said casually, as he



bended down to touch the tip of his foot.

"I don't have lunch at the cafeteria" she explained, all her curls falling down on her face since she had thought it would be a good idea to leave them loose since the class was almost over; spoiler alert, it had been a mistake.

"Why not?"

"Cause I'm too busy" she groaned, going back up "and a loser"

To this, contrary to what she was expecting him to do, he chuckled.

"Good to know. You could've warned you were a loser before I agreed to be your partner" that made her laugh too, because he was clearly joking.

"As if you had a way out of this to begin with" to that, he smiled again.

They were both with their bottoms on the floor and feet's against the others and they had had to grab hands so they could stretch each other's backs. She had been a little nervous about the whole hands things, not because she fancied Steve or anything like it, but because it was a rather intimate thing, but then again, they were in P.E. The blonde discovered his hands were soft and just the right amount of warm, whereas hers were freezing, as he let her know.

"Why you're always this cold?"

"Because they make us wear shorts and short sleeves t-shirts while its about -300 degrees?"

"Come on, is not that bad. Besides you sweat it out, that's why they give us these, but still every time I see you you're all covered on goose bumps"

"Yes, because I suffer during winter. Is just too cold for me to cope" she complained.

He laughed again, and as it her turn to move forwards and for him to pull, he began talking again, just to make conversation because as

Maisie Henderson had noticed, he was the kind of person who found conversation to be something easy, which worked with her because she loved talking too as long as she liked the person with whom she was doing it.

"Are you coming to the bonfire tonight? Or are you gonna stay home doing loser things?"

"Is that today?" she asked casually as she let out a groan, relieved that some of her back pain was disappearing, making Steve smirk even if he couldn't see her face, since it was covered in hair.

"Yeah"

"No, I have plans"

"What, are you gonna watch the new star wars movie or something?" he teased, making her laugh slightly

"I'm not that kind of nerd" Maisie said, coming back to their initial position, soon both starting with their final move for the day, neck stretching "I'm just gonna watch some movies at my friend's house"

"Byers?"

"Yeah. You know him?" she asked, since despite being a small school and all, the two boys were completely opposites and she found the fact of Steve Harrington knowing her best friend a bit odd.

"We paid him last year for some pictures we needed for this project"

"Ah, right. He told me about that, I remember. Talented, huh?"

"Yeah, they were alright" he shrugged "Are you two dating or something?"

Upon that comment, she couldn't help but to look at the boy next to her with both her brows raised, trying to catch a glimpse of other intentions linked to his words, but found nothing but mere curiosity coming from his face.

"No, we're best friends"

"Then you should come to the bonfire"

"Why?"

"Cause it'd be fun"

"I'll think about it" she said after a few seconds, unsure of how to feel about the preposition.

Despite the clear casual way in which Steve had mentioned, it was the closest thing Maisie Henderson had gotten to an invitation to a social event by someone around her age, not to mention the first one ever made by someone as popular as Steve Harrington. Was she curious about how fun something like that could really be? Of what if feel hanging out with all her school mates somewhere other than school like most people did? Hell yeah, but at the same time, she knew that for unpopular kids, things like those tended to turn weird. Not to mention Jonathan would probably refuse, and there was no way she'd dare going on her own.

When the class was finished, just as they always used to do, they walked together towards the showers, making small talk. Since he didn't have many friends among those sophomores and she didn't have any at all, ever since Monday they had begun walking off together, although there was no doubt many girls and boys had tried getting closer to Steve.

"You're not so terrible at elongating, Henderson. I'm surprised" he joked, making her smile and push the whole bonfire thing out of her brain.

"I do dance, asshole" she joked back.

"Ahh"

And given that they had reached the part where the two walked towards each corresponding's sets of showers, they ended their conversation with a 'see you around' by her part, and a 'I'll see you tonight' by his.

During the rest of the day, Maisie just couldn't help but keep thinking about whatever on earth she wanted to do during that night. Was she

going by her life motto about seizing the opportunity and taking it and chose to go to the party and experience just for once what it feels like being a regular teenager but risk feeling awkward and God knows what or was she going to go easy, stay at Jonathan's and enjoy a nice but regular hang out like every other Friday but causing no harm to her self-esteem? Damn Steve Harrington for creating such doubts within her.

When they were at the car, enjoying some meat pies Claudia Henderson had told Maisie to take to school and share with her friends, she debated whereas or not she should ask Jonathan, after all, she knew he'd say no and she wasn't even that sure about going anyway.

Just as she was going to forget all about it and tell herself to stick to her own business instead of getting herself into possible problems she didn't need nor want, she saw as some girls from her history class, Laurie and Becky, got out the building giggling, heading towards their car and then leaving the school towards who knew where. It was such a stupid thing to do, but Maisie certainly felt like perhaps it'd feel nice to do all those things, not to miss out on the stupidity teenage years carried within them.

Looking over at Jonathan's face as he talked about how close he was to save enough money to buy himself this new lens for his camera, she let out all that was troubling her on a fast and almost non understandable speech, just like Maisie Henderson always did when she kept on something for too long.

*"Would you like to go to the bonfire tonight?"*

Jonathan Byers looked at her as if she had grown another head, not because he found the insinuation to be scandalous or anything like it, but plainly because he hadn't been able to understand a single word of what the blonde had said.

"Could you calm down and say that again?" he laughed.

"I said, do you want to go to the bonfire tonight?" she said slowly, envisioning how his amused expression turned into a very confused one word by word

"To the bonfire? Weren't we supposed to watch 'Wizard of Oz' at my place?"

"Yes! But... we do that every weekend. I was thinking... well, maybe we could do something different for once... see if we like it... maybe It could be fun..." she said on a high pitched voice, one she usually had on when trying to convince people about things.

"Maisie, we're not even invited to that thing"

"That's the thing!" the girl yelled with a smile "We" she said pointing towards the two of them "are invited"

"Since when?"

"Today! At P.E. Steve said we should go, It'll be fun"

Despite it looking like a better idea each time she opened her mouth than she thought it was before, the blonde could see her best friends was not as much of a fan of the idea, the lack of smile proving it.

"Steve? Steve Harrington?"

"Well yeah, I told you he was my new gym partner"

"I didn't know gym partner meant you went to parties together and stuff"

"He was just being nice, Jonathan!" she rolled her eyes, seeing that his problem had shifted from the bonfire towards the actual boy "Seriously, I didn't know you had a problem with him, has he ever done anything to you?" she asked with actual concern.

While she had never heard anything about Steve Harrington doing or saying anything to her best friend, there was always the possibility that something had indeed happened and the Byers boy had decided to keep quiet about it; after all, Jonathan was indeed a loner and kids at school tended to pick on that and he wasn't a big fan of telling her when people did that, no matter how many times Maisie had told him to do so. Steve Harrington on the other hand, no matter how normal and nice he seemed while in P.E, was a popular kid who hanged with other popular kids, so the possibility was indeed very

strong.

"No, Maisie, but he's a prick"

"How do you know that?"

"Because I've got a brain?"

"Oh and I don't?"

Of course Jonathan had come up with something smart to say in return by the expression that flashed on his face, and Maisie recognized it, but he stopped himself from saying anything. He was the kind of boy who didn't like hurting people, even when on arguments, so each time he was about to say something that'd have the least of chances of bothering her, he'd do what he had just done: sigh, close his eyes, and then look at her again trying to come up with something to say that wouldn't necessarily hurt her in any way.

"Look, I just don't think he's much of a good guy, okay? He laughs whenever Tommy H. or someone from that group make a joke at someone's expense, and yes, that has been me maybe once or twice, but that's not why I don't like him. He's never talked to you during how many years of high school and now all of the sudden he's inviting you to do stuff and waving at you at the hallways? I don't know, Maisie... but it seems strange"

As much as the blonde wanted to yell at him and tell him he was wrong and being selfish, she couldn't. He was speaking to her in such a soft way, actually trying to make her understand his reasoning rather than just telling her that she was being stupid, that it was difficult for her to even keep on arguing. And really, she guessed he was kind of right; Tommy H. made fun of any walking thing, and his friends would usually all laugh about it, so why wouldn't Steve Harrington given that he was so popular among his peers? She hadn't thought of it to be strange when he invited her, she didn't see any second intentions but being friendly, but perhaps she was wrong; what did she know?

Sighing, she looked down, looking utterly disappointed on herself by being so trusting on someone she had just met.

"Yeah... maybe you're right" she gave him a small smile which didn't meet her eyes "I guess we can... um... order some pizza?"

He smiled softly; glad to see she wasn't taking it the wrong way and starting to see things just like did: "sure, even some pineapple"

That made her smile a bit more.

ooo

When Jonathan Byers picked up Maisie on his way out from work, he couldn't help but notice despite the smile, that the girl was indeed disappointed on not going to the social event where half the people from their year and above would be going to have fun and stuff. He sometimes felt guilty, seeing that the blonde was indeed a very social person who could make friends with pretty much anyone, if she wanted to, but decided to stick by him, a person who preferred being ran over with a truck than talking to more than a person at once. Sometimes he felt as if he dragged her behind.

That morning, in his car, when she had told him all nervous about the bonfire he had been quick to dismiss it, for several reasons, the main one being his lack of trust for Harrington and all his friends but also because it was really an unknown situation for both of them, and a small part of him, had also refused because he had been scared. Scared of what exactly? Losing her. He knew Maisie Henderson and how she was able to grow on people, how actually good fun she was and how easy it was for her to make conversation with strangers if she liked them; when he had first thought about them going to a party, he saw the big chance of everyone loving her and of her finding joy in hanging out with those people, leaving him by himself. He honestly believed that if anyone spent at least five minutes with the girl and got to know her at least half of what he knew her, they'd soon want them to be with them 24/7.

He wasn't scared of being completely friendless, no, if his only friend had been anyone else, he knew he could manage to be on his own with no one else but his brother and mother if it came down to it, but Maisie wasn't just a regular friend. He thought of her as his sister, as part of his family, because she had always been there for him and seemed to always care about every single thing concerning him.

It was because of how much he loved Maisie that he didn't take the first turn to the left when they passed Montgomery St, making the girl frown, being completely familiar with the way towards Jonathan's house by that stage.

"Why-

"Is it around Clamsburry Rd. Right?" her green eyes were full of confusion "The bonfire, I mean. I heard some kids from Chem class talking about it"

"You... what?"

He smiled upon her surprise, since he wasn't one to cause that reaction on her a lot.

"Didn't you say you wanted to experience and stuff? You're always reciting that motto from that play you saw when you were like ten, I forgot what's called 'opportunity something'"

"*Opportunity is not a lengthy visitor!*" she shrieked with energy "That's from 'Into the Woods'"

"Yeah that one"

"Ooooooh, Johnny boy" she said as she managed to half hug the boy, making him chuckle as he tried to keep on driving.

It was easy to see she was very excited about the whole thing, her eyes alone told you that. She was in fact so happy, that she didn't even complain about the fact that she wasn't dressed properly for the thing. She had no idea what appropriate was for those kind of things, but she guessed a knitted baby pink sweater and a lavender jacket wasn't it; thanks goodness she hadn't gone for the sweatpants and instead settled for the jeans.

When they got off the car, they noticed dozens of other cars parked around, meaning that the thing was big. Jonathan sure thing looked terrified to be in there, and the blonde noticed, making her way next to him and pulling from his shirt to get him to move along with her. She wanted him to have a nice time, just as much as she wanted to have a nice time herself.



Being an outdoor event, no one really noticed them arriving given that it was a bit too dark for them to do so, which was a good thing on both Maisie and Jonathan's books. As he stood there awkwardly, looking down at his feet, the girl was dazzled by the music and the huge amount of people that stood there, holding cups on their hands and apparently on a good mood; some of them dancing slightly. Was that what she had been missing of all that time?

"Johnny boy! Let's dance!" she said eagerly, once again pulling from his clothes to get the stiff boy to move a little, but without much luck, not that she minded, knowing that if there was one thing Jonathan Byers was even worse at than socializing, that would be dancing.

Despite the lack of skills from her dance partner, she managed to have a good time and laugh while moving her body along with the music. '*The Thompson Twins*' a band she actually thought was pretty hip, was sounding on the background; their song, 'Hold me now' was a tune she enjoyed moving along with while in her room, and she was delighted to find that dancing to it outside, at a party, with real people, felt just as nice as doing it by herself.

"I think I've got to go to the toilet" Jonathan tried telling her, but that was difficult when she wouldn't stop moving

"What?"

"I've gotta go to the bathroom"

"Okay!" she yelled back, still hopping around.

As Jonathan made his way into the woods, because he was sure that the toilet would be trashed by then, Maisie was left by herself still moving around as a new song began. She didn't mind being on her own while other people were around, looking at her weirdly as she danced by herself without another care in the world; she was used to that. Dancing was the moment when she felt the most like herself, people could be taking a picture of her to laugh at it after and she'd have kept on doing it.

She'd have kept on moving along if she hadn't felt a cold hand

grabbing her by the shoulder, making her jump on her spot and turn around immediately. Who she found made her smile, forcing herself to stop dancing so she could pay attention to him. Sure thing she wasn't expecting on seeing this person.

"You made it, Henderson!" he said with a smile "No stars wars tonight, it seems"

That made her chuckle. Glad to have another person to talk to now that Jonathan was gone. As she said, she didn't mind being by herself among people, but chatting with someone who seemed nice definitely didn't hurt.

Instead of telling him once again she held not even an ounce of interest on star wars, she asked him something else instead.

"How did you know it was me? It's impossible to recognize anyone around here"

"Seriously, Henderson? You have like the coolest and most recognizable hair on the whole school- after mine, of course. I'd recognize it anywhere"

That made her laugh, once again and squeeze her eyes to see if he was simply mocking her on a bad intentioned way, but was glad to see he didn't mean anything with it. Not many people around would call her hair 'cool', and she had often been teased and picked up about it before. Steve '*the hair*' Harrington saying that it was cool, truth or not, was indeed interesting.

"I suppose you're right" she said, making him smile as well "Who's in charge of the music? I love this song!" she yelled as 'I melt with you'- a tune she'd play over and over back at home, began. Her overly expressive reaction mad him crack with laughter and get closer to her, so she could her him among all the people.

"If you like it so much why aren't you dancing?"

It only took a smile on her part and he grabbed her from the forearm very lightly, clearly intending nothing bad by doing so. Unsure, she followed a strange situation indeed it was. Last time she had danced

with a boy had been back during the winter dance, and she had braces and hadn't hit on puberty yet. However, the awkwardness didn't last for long, as Steve Harrington began waving his hips on the freest of ways, she couldn't help but chuckle and begin doing so herself.

They were doing something between silly dancing and actual dancing, every now and then moving their arms and hands on the dorkiest of ways but always moving the lower part of their bodies in tune with the music. Smiles plastered over their faces

"You move well, Henderson" he yelled "Unlike in P.E"

If anything, that comment made her smile even more and hit him playfully on the arm. Now, she wasn't tipsy as the boy in front of her or anything near it, not having drank anything at all, but she was having genuine fun and found herself enjoying the company. It made her feel as if she was part of something she had never been allowed in before: the perks of being an actual teenager.

"I told you I did dance, dumbass"

They kept on dancing and laughing at each other's silly moves until the song was finished. They both shared a final round of giggles when it had finally come to an end. When he felt like he was close to losing balance, Steve quickly placed his hand over the blonde's shoulder, trying to stabilize himself and finding nothing odd in it, after all, he was just dandy and unaware of many things at the moment. Maisie however, wasn't, and she froze completely upon him doing such a simple thing; not out of fear or anything, but surprise, seeing her acquaintance with the boy was already on the stage of physical contact.

"You're fun. I like you" he stated as 'Don't change' by the INXS began playing on the background, not that any of them was listening to it.

And as she was about to answer to that, not even bothering to hide the amount of surprise those words provoked on her, his eyes drifted away on the distance and with a little pat on her shoulder and a final smile, he left with nothing but a 'talk to you later'

Turning around, to see whatever it was that had caught Steve's attention all of the sudden, Maisie was able to spot Nancy Wheeler standing awkwardly with a few of her friends; odd, giving that Nancy wasn't much of a party girl either.

Unsure of how to feel, she didn't even get the time to figure that out, since Jonathan was standing right next to her the second after Steve Harrington had left. He had been waiting near, since he had arrived on the middle of their dancing but hadn't wanted to make it weird by interrupting him; however, the scene he had just witnessed, creeped him out.

"Hey, wanna go home now? I'm feeling a bit tired"

The blonde opened and closed her mouth a few times, unsure of what her answer should be. Yes, she wanted to keep on dancing because she was having actual fun, but she also wanted to leave and go think about whatever had happened. Sure, it hadn't been much, but that little interaction she had just had with Steve Harrington had been the first positive thing to ever come up between her and a boy her age; besides, he had told her he liked her! Not even the people who were supposed to tell her that ever said those words to her

Finally, she gave a nod to her friend, smiling at him. Regardless of what she wanted, which she wasn't sure what it was, she was able to see her friend was feeling uncomfortable and that wasn't his scene, it'd only be cruel to force him to stay there.

ooo

Monday had definitely been weird to Maisie Henderson for multiple things. The first one being, how was she supposed to react to Steve Harrington once she saw him at P.E? Well, to rephrase that, she was worried about how he would act towards her instead of the other way around; he was nice and friendly, but she was worried that perhaps he'd regret having danced with her during the party because maybe he was drunk and would now treat her weirdly about it, not to damage his reputation or something among those lines, like she saw on movies.

Another reason for Monday morning being odd, was the absence of

Jonathan Byers; the boy barely missed any classes, even when sick, and she was sure that when he had dropped her at her place after movies and pizza at his house on Friday night, he looked perfectly fine.

She waited for Jonathan until the bell rang, risking getting late to class, but still there was no trace of his Ford or him anywhere near the school. Convincing herself that perhaps he had slept in or gotten real sick all of the sudden, she made her way back inside, knowing she'd be facing a long day since the boy was the only person with whom she spend time during recesses and lunch. She decided that perhaps she'd drive to his house later on, see if he wanted to copy off her notes of the day.

As the first few classes went on, she kept mostly to herself, chatting with some of the girls from her drama class with whom she got along nicely but were from other years- the only sophomore who was in the same class was Donna Green, and she was a nasty piece of something, that girl.

By the time English class began , which was just before lunch time, she had completely forgotten about Steve Harrington being in that class at all, so when he passed by her desk and said 'Hey, Henderson' she was in such shock that she didn't reply at all.

Had she not been worried about coming up with a plan regardless of where to spend lunch time, since she found no appeal on doing it at her car by herself, she wouldn't have been distracted when she stood up, and would've definitely noticed the girl who was just passing by with her own set of books. The junior girl let out a sword as she leaned down to pick her stuff up, Maisie quickly doing the same as she apologized over and over, trying to help her out. She was just looking upon the girl's furious face as she heard a very out of place chuckle coming from her back.

When she turned, she confirmed that indeed, that chuckled had escaped from Steve Harrington's lips. He was standing right there looking amused, and the girl whose books had all been dropped frowned upon seeing him there, leaving with a slight annoyance look on her eyes. It was safe to say she was neither a fan of Steve nor Maisie.

"You really have to learn how to regulate your balance, Henderson" he joked, offering his arm to the girl to help her stand up.

Without thinking much of it, she took it.

"My balance had nothing to do with this, I swear. I just was distracted"

"With what? Please don't tell me it was with whatever it is we're supposed to be learning"

Rolling her eyes slightly, as they began walking towards the exit door, she rolled her eyes.

"First off, Othello is one of the greatest pieces ever written, thank you very much"

"Nerd"

"Second, no, that wasn't it" she interrupted, pretending as if he had said nothing, just to annoy him a little "Anyway, you should've helped me. I'm your P.E partner, you know?"

"How could I ever forget" he chuckled "And?"

"And?"

"Are you going to tell me what was it you were distracted about?"

"No"

"Nice"

They both looked at each other for a bit, amusement clear on both faces, and then they began laughing. They had gotten out of the classroom, but they were still walking together. Since she was on her way towards the exit of the building, for she had decided she'd have lunch just where she usually had it, which was a car, she wasn't planning on turning. Steve, who was on his way towards the cafeteria, still hadn't made it to the door.

"Did you have a nice time Friday?" she asked

"Yeah, got fun. You're good dancer, by the way"

"Well, thank you. You're not too bad yourself"

"I know, but that's obvious"

With that she rolled her eyes, chuckling just slightly. They had just reached the spot where they drove apart. Expectantly, he looked at her.

"What?"

"Aren't you going in?" he asked, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

"I told you I don't eat at the cafeteria" she said, already walking and leaving him behind. She turned so she could still look at him as she walked backwards "I'm a loser, remember?"

She didn't get the chance to look at his face, but heard something that resembled laughed by the time she had turned over to keep on walking towards the exit door.

"Go watch some stars wars"

Maisie chuckled to herself as she got out of the school doors.

ooo

She had finally decided what It was she would be doing. Since breaking her routine a little had helped her during Friday night, she guessed she could only do the same thing during Monday, hence why she chose to skip P.E- her last class of the day, and instead drive towards Jonathan's house around lunch time. All she wanted was check on him and perhaps give him some of her notes. Besides, as much more bearable P.E was with Steve's help, it was still a pain in the arse.

Nothing could've prepared Maisie for what she saw as she parked her car outside the Byers' place: police officers, Jonathan and his mom were all walking around the grounds, seeming to be looking for something. Maisie hoped nothing bad had happened, like someone

robbing their house or some creep stalking them. With wary, she opened her car's door, dragging a bit of attention to herself when she smashed it closed.

As she walked towards the police officers, she could feel her their eyes on her. She didn't have to ask anything before Jonathan spoke up, his voice sounded desperate and even before she was able to understand the words, she knew something was very wrong.

"We can't find Will"

ooo

It was already dark when she drove back home that night, the only reason why she had agreed to go back home was purely to check on her own brother and the grab some hiking shoes to go and help the search party. She drove fast, because she wanted to make it there quickly so she'll soon do everything that had to be done and she could be out again looking for Will. Somehow, she felt as if she stopped doing things, even for a second, she'd start crying.

If what she did to her car could be called parking, that's what she did in half the time she'd have done it on normal circumstances. When she opened the front door, she yelled for her brother and mother, almost dropping her keys on the way.

"Maisie!" her mother cried from the kitchen "I've been worried sick about you. Do you know know what time is it? Do you know what just happen? I even called the police"

"I was with the police, helping find Will"

"So you do know!"

"Yes, I know. That's why I'm going to help find him. Where's Dustin?"

"I'm here" her brother suddenly said, getting into the room and leaving some torches over the table as he fixed his jacket "and I'm going too"

Her mother looked at both of them as if they had finally lost their minds.



"No, I'm sorry, Maisie and Dusty, but you can't leave the house. It's dangerous out there"

Claudia Henderson didn't say no to her children too often. In fact, she had been blamed multiple times by other family members, including her former husband, on being too soft on her children, and how that'd make them turn up to be unpleasant brats. However, Maisie knew that there were times when there was no point on trying to convince her mother to allow her to do something when the other had set her mind against it, that's why she sighed and decided that keep pushing would do no good to anyone. However, her brother didn't seem to understand that just yet, which is why he kept on arguing, trying to convince his mother.

"Fine" Maisie said.

Dustin looked at her as if she were crazy.

"Fine? Not fine, Maisie. Why are you giving up? I thought you cared about Will"

"You know I do, but mom's right, Dustin. It's dangerous out there"

"That's exactly why we've got to find Will!" he yelled

"Dusty, stop that now" Mrs. Henderson tried reasoning.

Although the blonde girl loved her brother very much, she wasn't about to sit around as he yelled at her for something she actually had already planned out, so she left the room after telling her mother she'd be missing dinner that night, she wasn't feeling hungry and rather felt like going to bed early.

It was about ten minutes until her brother gave up as well, and she was able to tell that because of the sound his bedroom's door made when he smashed it close. With a sigh, the girl grabbed her jacket and without even calling, she popped her head inside the little boy's room, just to see him with the biggest of frowns resting on his bed.

"Come on, Dustin"

"Where- what- I thought-

"Did you honestly think I wasn't going to look for Will? Put your shoes on and hurry, we'll be getting out from my room"

It took him a moment to understand what was actually going on, but once he did, he ran over his sister and wrapped both arms around her, making her chuckle slightly. How could've he even doubted her? His sister was bloody amazing, or so he thought.

After placing a pillow under their blankets, because they knew well enough that just as every other night their mother would check on them before going to bed, both Hendereson kids climbed down from Maisie's window. It was the very first time Dustin had ever done that, so his sister offered to get down herself and wait for him, just to make sure everything went well on his descending; although not much more experienced, the Henderson girl had in one occasion made use of that very unconventional exit, back when their father still lived with them and she hadn't been allowed to go to a carnival her then friends had all made plans to go.

Not being the athletic type, she was worried her brother would fall when making his way down, but besides one little scratch on his arm, there wasn't much to worry about. Buckling their backpacks close and making sure they had everything they'd need, they both hopped into Dustin's bicycle and made Maisie's most uncomfortable ride ever. She did have a bike of her own, but that one hadn't been used in a long time and rested on the garage and if she even attempted to get it out, her mother would surely notice.

"What're you doing?" she asked as her brother didn't get off the bike once they arrived.

"I'm meeting Mike and Lucas a block from here and we'll look on our own"

"That was not the deal, Dustin"

"We never made a deal!"

"It's not safe" she told him, getting closer in order to stop him if he attempted to leave.

"Come on! I've got my walkie talkies and I'll be safe. I promise. Jonathan can drive you back after. Besides, it's not like you can tell on mom"

And he really got a point there, much to her annoyance. She made him promise about three times he'd be safe and that he'd stick with his friends, but on the end, she left him go, cursing to herself. Had she not promised her best friend she'd be meeting him there, she'd have followed Dustin with the rest of his friends, mainly to give herself some kind of reassurance she could keep them safe and also because, no matter how young those kids were, they were pretty smart individuals.

"Be home before 12 or else I'm telling mom"

Looking around as she exhaled some white smoke from her mouth and brushed both her hands together, Maisie found Jonathan, and she made her way towards him since it was far too dark for him to see her there.

When she touched his arm and he looked at her, she saw a hint of relief on his eyes, which made her smile sadly. She couldn't even comprehend what her best friend may be going through, if anything ever happened to Dustin she wouldn't even be able to function properly without crying, and she knew Jonathan and Will were just as close as she was with her own sibling.

"Hey there" she said softly "Don't worry, we'll find him"

Jonathan gave her a nod and forced out some kind of smile, and then both began calling after Will's name, looking past every tree and rock, but they found nothing. They weren't even interacting with each other, which was understandable considering they were sick worried and trying to put all their attention around the forest, in hopes of finding that little boy.

An hour passed, then two, she didn't want to say it but luckily, she didn't have to, because with a sigh Jonathan placed a hand over her shoulder, managing to make her look up over him with her big eyes.

"I think we should go home. I don't want to make my mum worry

more than she must be. I wasn't supposed to leave the house tonight"

Maisie nodded, and although she'd have wanted to keep on looking, she knew she had to go home too. For once, because she had to make sure her brother had made it as well, and also because they were getting close to Cartesville and she didn't know how long it'd take her to walk back from there. Also, the cold was killing her.

As planned, Jonathan drove her back to her house. They were both completely silent on their way back, and the blonde couldn't help but sneaking up looks to see what his expression would be like, but found nothing but a dead stone face.

"Thanks" she said softly once they reached her house. They parked a little bit ahead, so her mother wouldn't wake up from the sounds coming from the engine.

He gave her a nod, and as she thought he wouldn't say anything else, she leaned over to grab the door handle, only to find Jonathan softly grabbing her upper arm.

"Wait" he'd said "Thank you, really, for coming and helping to look out for Will and all"

"You know Will is like a brother to me" she smiled softly, thinking about the little boy while touching Jonathan's arm as well on a soothing manner "and you know I'll be here for whatever you need right now, okay?"

He nodded, managing to smile just lightly, hurt still visible on his eyes.

Just as she was about to leave, she looked once again onto those sad puppy eyes and she just couldn't help herself but to go in for a tight hug. Surprisingly, she was met by him hugging back. No matter how many years both teens had known each other for, or how close they were, hugging was something they did lightly perhaps on birthdays and they always lasted for a few seconds and weren't too much of a deal. This time, however, their hug held more feeling than anything they could've said to each other would.

She climbed her way back into her room, for she didn't know what time it was and didn't want to risk her mother still being awake and catching her coming through the front door. The first thing she did was checking on Dustin only to find he still wasn't there. Looking at her clock, she noticed the boy still had about an hour if he didn't want her telling on their mother, who, by the way, seemed to be completely passed out.

She didn't go to sleep until she heard the sound of clumsy footsteps coming from the stairs, knowing no one else but Dustin could be that loud even when trying not to be. She was thankful Claudia Henderson wasn't a light sleeper. Not even waiting to go and talk to her brother, because she was very, very tired, she fell asleep immediately.